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ABSTRACT

Four articles on higher education curriculum are presented. In "The Articulate Curriculum" an approach to curriculum description is presented that is designed to have minimal ambiguity concerning the intention, content, and processes of the curriculum and that will lead to questioning several discrete factors in the curriculum planning process. It is suggested that curriculum planning requires consistencies in structure and logic provided in specific curriculum models and learning theories. Useful planning models include the means-end model, process models, and student-centered and teacher-centered models. In "Liberal Education: The Case for Core," by Irene J. Matthews, the central features of several attempts at liberal reform in higher education are considered, and the need for core requirements are suggested. In "Educational Philosophy and Curriculum Orientations in Higher Education," by Claudia Harvey and Bia Rovers, curriculum orientations that derive from more general philosophies or world views are described as follows: the self-actualizing curriculum, the behaviorist curriculum, information processing or academic rationalism curriculum, and social reconstructionist curriculum. Implications for decision-making about curriculum planning and educational activity are addressed. In "Bachelor of Commerce, Major in Accountancy: Is It an Education?" by Maurice Gold, the undergraduate bachelor of commerce program at Concordia University in Montreal is described. The program involves 90 credits, a 51-credit core requirement plus the 30-credits in accountancy courses and 9 credits of electives. (SW)

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CURRICULUM IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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GUEST EDITOR: OTL is pleased to welcome **Dr. A. I. Rothman** of the Division of Studies in Medical Education, University of Toronto as guest editor. In addition to publishing on educational development and medical and health education, Dr. Rothman also teaches in the Higher Education Group at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

The Articulate Curriculum

According to Webster two groups of meanings are assigned to the word *articulate*. One focuses on clarity and affectiveness of expression and the other on the coming together of parts into a systematic whole. Both are addressed in the following brief essay on curriculum in higher education. What is proposed is an approach to curriculum description that leads to (1) minimal ambiguity concerning the intention, content and processes of curriculum (described under the heading Curriculum Description) and (2) the consideration of several discrete factors in the curriculum planning process (described under the headings Curriculum Context, Curriculum Structure and Logic, and Curriculum Review) that when integrated provide a curriculum that has internal logic and external validity and integrity.

Curriculum Description

A curriculum is an attempt to communicate the essential principles and features of an educational proposal in such a form that it is open to critical scrutiny and capable of effective translation into practice.

(Stenhouse, 1978, p. 4)

This prescription requires considerably more than the conventional pronouncements of faculty bulletins and programme or course outlines. Moreover, its intent is to serve wider and more important purposes than those served by these documents. According to **Stenhouse** (p. 5) a curriculum/course description should present with the same clarity and completeness as a scientific proposal and should be capable of serving the same functions, that is, it should provide the bases for planning, implementation, empirical study, and ultimate justification or rejection.

This prescription casts the teacher (curriculum/course developer) in the role of investigator whose mission includes the exploration and testing of educational hypotheses rather than the acceptance or rejection of curriculum recommendations. (Stenhouse, p. 125.)

Stake (1967) has proposed a descriptive schema in a discussion of curriculum evaluation that serves as a suitable example. The aspect of his schema, that is pertinent, identifies intended antecedents, transactions and outcomes as suitable descriptive foci. **Antecedents** are described as any condition existing prior to teaching and learning that may relate to outcomes; **transactions**, include the complete spectrum of personal engagements that comprise the educational process; and **outcomes** can go beyond those commonly articulated as educational objectives and encompass all the anticipated consequences of the educational programme "immediate and long-range, cognitive and conative, personal and community-wide". (Stake, p. 528.)

Curriculum Context

As the context for all curricular expression, the parent institution and in particular its purposes and functions require consideration, for logic requires that institutional and curricular value positions coincide. For example, is the primary educational value of the institution instrumental or liberal? Does the institution have international, national, regional and local outlooks and responsibilities? Is there an identifiable institutional educational posture or does the institution present a spectrum of educational perspectives as does **Kerr's** (1973) multiversity?

These and similar questions should be consciously addressed

by the curriculum planner. The answers should be implicit in curriculum statements and processes.

Curriculum Structure and Logic

In the paper referred to earlier, **Stake** (1967) suggests that the internally consistent curriculum is characterized by the presence of logical contingencies between the intended curriculum, antecedents, transactions and outcomes. Curriculum planning, dependent on the establishment of these contingencies requires the consistencies in structure and logic provided in specific curriculum models and learning theories. Useful planning models have both educational and psychological foundations. The list of these includes, for example, the **means-end model** that starts with the definition of educational objectives then proposes instructional procedures directed at the achievement of these objectives; **process models** where primary values are attached to educational processes such as problem solution, rather than outcomes; as well as **student-centred** and **teacher-centred models** that stress student and teacher primacy respectively in the processes of planning, implementation and the definition of value positions.

Perspectives on learning that can have value in the process of curriculum planning in higher education, include, for example, a developmental position (**Perry**, 1970) that involves growth in students' characterizations of knowledge and values. **Skinner's** (1954) behaviourist perspectives have found effective expression in the Personalized System of Instruction (PSI) or Keller Plan (1968) courses. At the other extreme **Rogers'** (1969) humanism has been central to the development of curricula that encourage maximum student freedom and responsibility in the learning process.

Curriculum Review

It is incorrect to view a curriculum as a static organizational device. A curriculum is in fact organismic and thus characterized by a dynamic that is continuous but not necessarily constant nor purposeful. In the **Stake** (1967) paper, that author incorporates the contrasting of intended and actual curricular events (antecedents, transactions, and outcomes) as a central feature of an evaluation proposal. By extending this model to incorporate periodic contrasting of actual curricular events at regular time intervals, changes in curriculum can be monitored, described and reacted to. Implied therefore is a cybernetic approach to curriculum review that requires regular and systematic feedback along with its attending organization and mechanisms.

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LIBERAL EDUCATION: THE CASE FOR CORE

By Irene J. Matthews,
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The primary function of a university is to produce persons who are learned, skilled in oral and written communication, critical, responsible and intelligently adaptable.

Donald F. Forster, President,
University of Guelph,
University of Guelph. Annual Report 1978. *(June 30, 1978).*

Harvard, Boston, Stanford, Amherst, Guelph, McMaster and Concordia universities have each expressed concern about undergraduate education structures that permit their students excessive freedom in course selection and hence participation in programs that may either be incoherent or that lead to premature specialization. These schools have reacted with attempts at curricular reforms based on local definitions of liberal education.

This essay will briefly describe and discuss the central features of several attempts at liberal reform in higher education and in so doing will try to establish that core requirements are a *sine qua non* to the success of these attempts.

In general, changes in undergraduate curricula focus on: **(1) basic communication skills; (2) an acquaintance with different modes of intellectual inquiry; (3) analytical skills; and (4) sensitivity to philosophical and ethical problems.**[1] Although certain kinds of skills, knowledge and values may be deemed basic to a liberal education, each institution differs in its approach to giving form to the achievement of the ideal, the liberally educated person.

Harvard's new core curriculum is composed of five basic areas, which combine to provide intellectual breadth in the undergraduate curriculum. This liberal aim is not achieved in a haphazard fashion by a broad coverage of contemporary knowledge; rather each area in the core is defined in terms of specific educational objectives, with the overall goal to expose students to certain important ways of gaining and applying knowledge.[2] Courses in expository writing, mathematics, and foreign languages, and training in the use of computers complete the core requirement and ensure that a proper balance is maintained between basic skills and more content-oriented subjects. These core components, with the support of an area of concentration and electives, enable Harvard to provide a liberal education which involves the "broad development of each individual's powers of reasoning and judgment" in order to create "that informed citizenry which is the necessary condition of a free society."[3]

The reforms undertaken by **McMaster** and **Concordia** deserve special attention because they serve as Canadian examples of recent innovation and experimentation in liberal education. While the Harvard core curriculum has its roots buried deep in its tradition of general education, both Concordia and McMaster have started afresh and have designed new undergraduate programs.

The new undergraduate program at **Concordia's Liberal Arts College** resembles Harvard's revamped undergraduate program since both combine "general liberal arts"[4] studies with specialization in disciplinary work. The inclusion of specialized studies allows for admission to professional and graduate studies. Concordia's core courses are intended to cover the "major areas of human knowledge and understanding"[5] in order to develop an "informed, literate, and critical consciousness."[6] However, cru-

cial to much of the success of both Concordia's and McMaster's, new programs is their dependence on certain teaching strategies. At Concordia, the core courses are taught with seminars and tutorials to ensure the "development of finely-honed expressive and research skills."[7] At McMaster, "inquiry seminars" are to be the pivotal feature of the program and will be carefully sequenced so that students will learn how to take an "interdisciplinary approach to questions of a practical nature affecting our society."[8]

At **McMaster**, the emphasis is to be on the acquisition and the practical application of skills and techniques of investigation as well as on the development of such intellectual skills as writing and verbal and quantitative reasoning. These aims will be realized through broad exposure to the arts and sciences by means of courses such as "Western Thought." The ultimate goal of McMaster's program "is to help men and women toward (the achievement of) a fuller life."[9] Liberal education's contribution to society lies in its preparing people "to make judgments in a broader frame, one that is sensitive to values and to the network of implications that follow from decisions."[10] McMaster's new program in arts and sciences will begin in September 1981 and require a "high standard for admission" as well as "honours level performance throughout."[11]

Senate approval in October 1980 of **Guelph's Report from the Committee to Study Liberal Education** and the recent establishment of an Advisory Committee to the Vice-President (Academic) to implement the recommendations of the Report demonstrate Guelph's commitment to the value of a liberal education. Like Concordia, McMaster and Harvard, Guelph has assumed that a "liberal education requires a combination of depth and breadth of study."[12] Its proposals for a liberal education do not follow the core models defined by Harvard, Concordia, and McMaster. Nor do its proposals take the form of a distribution requirement as a "means of increasing the liberal content of the university's program."[13] Rather, Guelph has drawn up a "model program," the definition of which warrants careful consideration.

This terminology is not intended to imply that any program which departs from the model must be second-rate or less than ideal. The term merely implies that satisfying the model is one good way to liberalize a program and that any committee that feels that another pattern is at least as good would have a responsibility to describe that pattern and demonstrate its effectiveness.[14]

A model Guelph liberal education program would be divided into three parts: free electives, core courses, and restricted electives, which, in combination, would form a coherent whole in which a balance is maintained between depth and breadth of study and student freedom of choice.

Guelph hopes that each undergraduate program in the university will use the "model program" in assessing the degree to which its schedule of studies meets the model's criteria. This approach will ensure that the overall objectives of liberal education — the development of intellectual, moral and aesthetic maturity — are met.

Harvard, McMaster, Concordia and Guelph have provided local definitions of the educational "experiences, appreciations, and accomplishments"[15] essential to the education of their undergraduates. At Harvard, McMaster and Concordia these essentials have been distilled into a core of courses which form a mandatory graduation requirement.

Any element of prescription beyond specialization requirements may be viewed with disfavour by many students as a curtailment of freedom of choice; prescribed requirements are considered a "luxury for which there is no time"[16] by students headed for professional schools. These concerns are disregarded by reforming institutions firmly convinced that the attainment of certain standards of intellectual competency is essential to an undergraduate education and can only be achieved with core requirements. Moreover, a synoptic view of knowledge is also viewed as an essential goal, not only for Arts and Sciences students but also for students in professional training programs.[17] Again, core requirements provide some assurance that a synoptic view will be achieved.

As has been pointed out by **Shulman** and **Levine**,[18] and as is apparent in the Canadian examples, there is a great range of possible "core" variations; these include "breadth" or "distribution" courses as well as integrative or "synoptic" courses[19] which can aid in plotting a more general curriculum and hence ensure a liberal education.

Core courses need not be solely "discipline based;" instead as Shulman describes, they can focus on themes, values, problems, essential skills, or whatever the institution considers important. The examples of Harvard, Concordia, and others need not be considered as the only models for an ideal liberal education experience. In the end, what each institution develops should reflect that particular institution's unique perspective of liberal education. The greater the inter-university diversity, the better, for reasons of establishing institutional identity, offering students a wide variety of choices of university undergraduate experiences. The common factor in each attempt to liberalize an undergraduate curriculum should be the conviction that specific mental skills and powers must meet a certain definite standard. Defining the satisfactory completion of a bachelor's degree solely in terms of a fixed number of undergraduate credits is unsatisfactory because it sets "no priorities, and ensures no minimum standard of education."[20] The attainment of these minimum standards cannot be left to student choice or to individual faculty preference.

The core requirement need not be independent of the contribution of the non-curricular aspects of university life, as these may have a major impact upon the student's undergraduate educational experience. Concordia, McMaster, and Guelph point out that the quality of the university's advising system, the variety of its extra-curricular activities, the role of student services and the impact of residential life can be a valuable support mechanism for academic learning activities and thus can make a distinct contribution to a liberal education. In particular, the **University of Guelph's Liberal Education** document[21] points out how several non-academic elements of the university are actively engaged in liberal education, especially in the area of moral and aesthetic development, and it suggests how these and relevant academic pursuits could be linked more closely.

Donald Forster, President of the University of Guelph, has stated that "university programs, at the undergraduate level, that concentrate solely on teaching specific job skills or solely on the acquiring of highly specialized knowledge do not, in my opinion, fulfil the proper role of the university."[22] Universities have several functions, but the primary one is to develop a more **educated** populace. A core requirement plays an important part in the achievement of that goal. Not only does it give the university a special identity by reflecting the aims and philosophies of the institution, but it also serves as the principal educative contribution to the student's university experience. The core focusses on the skills and knowledge that educated people need to cope in contemporary society, and thus it ensures that the fundamental objectives of a liberal education are met.

Without a core component, a university simply becomes a training ground for a profession or vocation. The goal of liberal education is lost.

Footnotes

1Carol Herrnstadt Shulman. "Revamping Core Curricula," **Research Currents**. AAHE-ERIC/Higher Education, May 1979, p. 3.
2Phyllis Keller. "The Core Curriculum: Goals and Courses," **Harvard Gazette**. September, 5, 1980, p. 664.
3**Ibid.**
4**Concordia University. Liberal Arts College. Brochure**. See also C. Tausig, "At Concordia Students Feel Hard Work Worth It," **University Affairs**. May 1980, pp. 2-4.
5**Ibid.**
6**Ibid.**
7**Ibid.**
8"New Programs in Arts and Sciences Coming in 1981," **McMaster News**. September 1980.
9"Revised Outline. A New Baccalaureate Degree Program in Arts and Science for McMaster University." April 20, 1980, p. 1.
10**Ibid.**, p. 3.
11"New Program in Arts and Sciences Coming in 1981," **McMaster News**. September 1980.
12"Liberal Education: Affirming a Commitment," **Guelph University News Bulletin**. August 28, 1980, p. 2.
13**Ibid.**, p. 4.
14**Ibid.**, p. 6.
15D. T. Hartman. "Developing a Core Curriculum," **The Forum for a Liberal Education**, October 1977.
16"A Humanistic Perspective on the Professions," **Change**. August 1978, p. 40.

17E. J. McGrath. **Liberal Education in the Professions**. New York: Teachers' College, Columbia University, 1959, p. 19.
18Arthur Levine. **Handbook on Undergraduate Curriculum**. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1978.
19Carol Herrnstadt Schulman. "Revamping Core Curricula," **Research Currents**. AAHE/ERIC/Higher Education, May 1979, pp. 1-4.
20Susan Schiefelbein. "Confusion at Harvard: What Makes an 'Educated Man?'," **Saturday Review**, April 1, 1978, p. 13.
21"Liberal Education: Affirming a Commitment," **Guelph University News Bulletin**. August 28, 1980, p. 2.
22D. F. Forster, "Personal Comments," **University of Guelph Annual Report 1978**. June 30, 1978, p. 11.

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND CURRICULUM ORIENTATIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

By Claudia Harvey and Ria Rovers, Higher Education Group, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

It is not surprising that questions arise about curriculum logic given the wide variety of curriculum models that exist in higher education systems. Curriculum planning implies a rational process of addressing the complex philosophical, sociological and psychological factors relevant to an educational pursuit, as well as considering the practical questions posed by the specific contexts of educational activities. In fact, the fundamental ideas underlying a curriculum ought to be, simultaneously, valuable in themselves, yet able to be developed and related to changing conditions. Achieving this balance between basic values and contextual realities is a task to which educational philosophers can make an important contribution.

This paper presents a form of logical analysis and demonstrates how such an analysis can facilitate practical decision-making about curriculum planning and educational activity.

Peters' general concepts of education, as articulated in his book, **Ethics and Education** (1966), are worthy of consideration.

According to Peters, education implies that something worthwhile is being or has been intentionally transmitted in a morally acceptable manner. Therefore, education is a commitment to what is thought valuable — specifically, the development of individual potential, intellect and character. Peters views education as an active process, as something only the individual can achieve himself. The teacher's success is consequently defined in terms of the learner, to the extent that students acquire a cognitive perspective — knowledge, skills and modes of conduct, in a manner which involves understanding and an evaluation of the rationale underlying these — the educator can consider his teaching effective.

The **concept of values** central to Peters' statement of philosophy is also dominant in **Hirst's** (1969) views on the logic of the curriculum. Hirst is also vitally concerned with the nature of the things students should achieve through education. He suggests that adequate curriculum planning demands three closely interrelated elements: (1) a set of clear objectives, i.e., the qualities of mind, the knowledge, skills, values that we wish students to acquire; (2) a program of activities intended to achieve the objectives; and (3) the content or subject matter of these activities. He views the generating of objectives as the process of determining what is most worthwhile and valuable in the educational enterprise.

Mayhew (1969: 188) sees the curriculum as "*the vehicle through which the institution seeks to make its most significant impact on the lives of students.*" This is done in terms of the essential elements identified by Hirst. As such, the objectives, methods and subject matter of a program are the vehicles through which the particular philosophy(ies) of institutions or individual professors are operationalized. Definitions of what is educationally valuable, worthwhile or morally acceptable (Peters, 1966) — to be transmitted through the curriculum — are further determined by particular temporal and social contexts.

Eisner and **Vallance** (1974) and **McNeil** (1977) have identified broad underpinnings or orientations of curriculum which themselves derive from more general philosophies or world views. Four such orientations of curriculum are self-actualization, behaviourist, information processing or academic rationalism, and social reconstructionist. Each of these orientations has a unique interpretation of what is valuable. These orientations are briefly described below and examples are drawn from the higher education system in Ontario in order to demonstrate, both, how educational philosophies are operationalized and how they are affected by temporal and social contexts.

1. **The self-actualizing curriculum**. Here, emphasis is placed on the realization of the goals and the growth of the capacities of the individual, and is congruent with Peters' (1966) assignment of value to the development of individual potential. It appears that this orientation in curriculum has sprung from an existential world view. Curricular models such as those advocated by **Knowles** (1975), **Pinar** (1978) and **Rogers** (1969) are consistent with this orientation. In higher education these models are best evidenced by cafeteria style options and programs as offered by the University of Toronto in the late '60s and '70s. Students in self-actualizing programs are given the opportunity to build their own programs from a wide variety of courses and de-emphasized required core content.
2. **The behaviourist curriculum**. In this orientation, stress is laid on the specification of precise objectives, content modules, the various means to achieve the objectives and clearly prescribed criteria to determine when they have been achieved. This orientation evolved from a mechanistic world view which assumes that human behaviour can be controlled and modified toward particular ends. It is best evidenced in the curriculum model advocated by **Skinner** (1971). Computerized and other programmed learning systems are probably the best examples of programs influenced by this philosophical orientation. Examples in Ontario higher education are the computer aided instruction methods used at various universities and colleges and the training packages used in technical and skill areas at the colleges.
3. **Information processing or academic rationalism**. This orientation derives from cognitive field psychology which emphasizes the subject matter to be learned and the mental processes required for the acquisition of the prescribed knowledge, skills and attitudes. **Peters'** (1966) view on the need for core subject matter to help in the development of a cognitive perspective falls within this orientation. **Hirst** (1969), also, although suggesting that education is not only concerned with intellectual development, stresses that the most basic educational objective ought to be the development of a rational mind: a mind which is capable of conceptualization and categorization, and of making rational judgments. In some of its

forms, this orientation is seen to be influenced by a platonic philosophy which advocated repetition and drill to "expand the mind." In its more modern manifestations, it may be seen in curricula that attempt to match the need to acquire core subject matter with the information processing capacities of individuals. Work by **Bruner** (1968) and **Phenix** (1964) illustrates both the emphasis on subject matter and on information processing. **Perry's** (1968) attempt to outline the developmental stages of university students probably best illustrates the mental processes approach to curriculum in higher education. On the other hand, curricula which stress certain essential learnings of an educated person, for example, the liberal arts components of some undergraduate programs, emphasize the academic component of this orientation.

The recent change from a **cafeteria** approach to a more classical **core** curriculum, introduced in the **Faculty of Arts and Sciences** at the **University of Toronto** is an illustration of a change from one curriculum orientation to another. It is noteworthy that the proposing document, the **Kelly Report** (1978), states that it would not deal with "certain fundamentals . . . the aims of university education, or the things that every graduate should know," for a number of reasons, most notably an anticipated lack of consensus within so large and diverse an institution. Nevertheless, the **Report** does make certain assumptions explicit: seriousness and difficulty are seen as marks of university study; a curriculum should encourage the development of human contacts and coherent communities within the very large and impersonal fabric of the university; and, a curriculum should help the student and the instructors to explore the interrelatedness of things.

While the previous Arts and Sciences program appeared to promise students a most attractive freedom of choice, it also fostered a consumerist attitude. Consequently, the **Report** suggested serious sequential study, concentration, and some breadth, in the revised undergraduate curriculum. The stated primary reason for change was to ensure that each student's program of study had academic worth and coherence and that it provided a cumulative experience of increasing knowledge and mastery in a chosen area, while at the same time requiring the inclusion of courses in more than one discipline. Specific requirements for specialist programs, commerce and finance programs, and major and minor programs were outlined, and the resulting curriculum now involves both structured and unstructured (elective) elements. These changes appear to adhere more closely to **Hirst's** (1969) criteria for a "logical curriculum," or one most influenced by this third orientation: academic rationalism.

4. **The social reconstructionist curriculum**. This orientation stresses the importance of the relevance of curricula to particular social situations with a view to critically examining society and if necessary contributing to its reconstruction. Such approaches derive from earth centred philosophies like Marxism and are best evidenced in the work of **Freire** (1970), and a growing group of writers committed to a critical pedagogy (see **Anyon**, 1980; **Apple**, 1980; and **Carnoy** and **Levin**, 1976). These approaches appear to have influenced certain professional programs. For example, a teacher education program at **Lakehead University** attempts to prepare teachers to meet the special needs of Ontarian Indian communities and the curriculum of the **Faculty of Education at the University of Toronto** has a special focus on multi-culturalism in an attempt to help its graduates work more efficiently in settings marked by ethnic diversity. A group of scholars at **The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education** is also pursuing the concerns of a critical pedagogy and recently organized a colloquium to explore these kinds of issues.[1] Apart from these specific program and informal approaches, however, this orientation does not seem to underpin the total curriculum of any institution in Ontario.

Comments on the orientations. It should be noted that discussions of curriculum orientations relate to the approch emphasized in programs rather than to singular influences. Any one curriculum can be influenced by more than one, or, indeed, all four orientations. For example, a mixture of curricular approaches can be identified in the **McMaster University** undergraduate medical education curriculum. The McMaster program — as most health professions programs — may be viewed as an "end-means" curriculum (**Tyler**, 1949), in that specific goals are clearly outlined. This seems to emphasize a behaviourist orientation. The "means," however, in turn follow the learning model advocated by **Knowles** (1975): self-directed learning. An important factor in the growth and development of the McMaster program has been a commitment to a central set of ideas which include self-directed learning, problem-based learning and small group tutorial learning. Additionally, there is an emphasis on diagnostic evaluation, on the selective use of learning resources, and on integrated learning and educational planning (**Neufeld** and **Barrows**, 1974: 1040). In this aspect the influences of the self-actualizing and information processing orientations are evidenced.

It can be noted that there have been trends towards emphasizing one orientation or another at different points in time. Thus, there was a clear tendency towards cafeteria type models influenced by the self-actualizing orientation in most North American institutions of higher learning in the late '60s and early '70s, followed by a swing back to academic rationalism in the late '70s. The previously described events at the University of Toronto provide a classic example of this kind of change.

It is safe to say that the orientations emphasized may be viewed as directly relating to the social climate of the times. In the '60s and early '70s, there was a major focus on individualization and on human, and, as such, student rights to self-determination. These movements favoured a self-actualizing orientation in curriculum. The questioning of the relevance of higher education in the late '70s resulted in a demand for accountability and consequently an attempt to justify the validity of such education. This resulted in the swing back to an emphasis on core curricula: models influenced by academic rationalism. The influence of economic factors is also in evidence here. For example, the availability of funding in the '60s and early '70s facilitated a wider choice of courses, while the monetary restraints of the late '70s have no doubt led to shortening of course lists.

In conclusion, the teacher in a higher education setting should understand the philosophical underpinnings of contemporary higher education curricula so that he may understand and participate in the ongoing processes of curriculum development and implementation. Moreover, this awareness will help him understand the present educational context, its history, and allow him to be a rational participant in its future evolution.

[1] **Beyond Passive Analysis: A Symposium on the Production of Social Distinctions in Classrooms**, The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Toronto, November 1980.

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BACHELOR OF COMMERCE, MAJOR IN ACCOUNTANCY: IS IT AN EDUCATION?

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The objective of the undergraduate **Faculty of Commerce and Administration** at **Concordia University** in Montreal is "to graduate students liberally educated about business."

This (Bachelor of Commerce) program provides the student with an education for business life. It is our intention to graduate students liberally educated about business. To accomplish this we have designed a multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary curriculum which is intellectually challenging. (1)

To obtain this 90-credit degree, all students are required to follow a "Major Program" which consists of "at least" 24 credits in the chosen discipline in addition to the required 51-credit core. The remaining 15 credits are unrestricted electives "generally" taken from those disciplines in the faculty other than the "Major."

The faculty is divided into the following departments: Accountancy, Finance, International Business, Management, Marketing and Quantitative Methods. The 51-credit core requirement consists of 2-3 credit courses in Accountancy, 4 in Quantitative Methods, 2 in Economics, 5 in Management, 2 in Marketing and 2 in Finance.

The student desiring a Bachelor of Commerce degree with a major in Accountancy must take a minimum of 10-3 credit courses in a specific sequence other than those in the core. His 90-credit degree will, therefore, consist of the 51-credit core plus the additional 30-credit Accountancy major courses plus the 9 credits of electives. Because most students majoring in Accountancy are "in the professional stream" (i.e., going for their C.A., C.G.A. or R.I.A.) they would naturally use their electives for additional accounting courses to strengthen their area of concentration. Thus, a graduate in this program will have taken 15 courses in Accounting, 4 in Quantitative Methods, 2 in Economics, 5 in Management, 2 in Marketing and 2 in Finance.

As stated earlier, the faculty objective is "to graduate students liberally educated about business." Those students majoring in Accountancy receive a "liberal business education" plus an intensive "professional education in accounting." The problem is that they do not receive a "liberal education" per se. Their education is restricted to the areas of business and accountancy.

The Bachelor of Commerce program with a major in Accountancy would, most certainly, not meet the "standards" for an "educated person" as set out by **Dean Henry Rosovsky** of **Harvard's Faculty of Arts and Sciences** (2). An "educated person," according to the Dean, "must be able to think and write clearly and effectively" and "have achieved depth in some field of knowledge." He "should have a critical appreciation of the ways in which we gain and apply knowledge and understanding of the universe, of society and of ourselves" as well as "have some understanding of, and experience in thinking about, moral and ethical problems." Finally, he "cannot be provincial in the sense of being ignorant of other cultures and other times."

True, our graduate will "have achieved depth" in accountancy and have "reasonable knowledge" about business. This makes him "educated" in one particular area only. **Northrop Frye** would argue that the objectives of this accountancy program are not the major purposes of a university education. (3)

Frye believes that university education is related to the maturation of "mental processes" such as reasoning, as distinct from rationalization; experiment; considered evidence; and disciplined imagination that appears in literature and the arts.

Whitehead, in the early part of the twentieth century, wrote:

Culture is activity of thought and receptiveness to beauty and human feeling. Scraps of information have nothing to do with it. A merely well-informed man is the most useless bore on God's earth. What we should aim at producing is men who possess both culture and expert knowledge in some special direction. Their expert knowledge will give them the ground to start from, and their culture will lead them as deep as philosophy and as high as art. (4)

The aims of education, according to Whitehead would therefore be to introduce the student to culture, give him expertise in a particular area and lead him to the path of discovery.

Dewey, like Whitehead, also saw education in terms of discovery. However, to him it was a process of discovering what values are worthwhile and are to be pursued as objectives.

To see what is going on, and to observe the results of what goes on so as to see their further consequences in the process of growth, and so on indefinitely, is the only way in which the value of what takes place can be judged. (5)

Winegard argues for a "balance of programs." He sees the university as "one of the main civilizing forces in our society."

The university is the only place where students of all ages may gain some understanding of human life, some measure of the history of our civilization, a knowledge of philosophy, a sense of great political events and regimes, some appreciation of the arts and a knowledge of literature that portrays the climate of the times, past and present. If we force the universities to become more vocationally oriented, we will lose one of the main civilizing forces in our society. (6)

"It is this very integration of philosophical, political, scientific and literature studies," states Winegard, "that really determines whether or not an education should be called liberal." One of the

major goals of a university is to develop a more educated populace. Is the student really being "educated" if his concentration is accountancy and he is not receiving at least some aspects of a "liberal" education? According to Dr. Winegard, "the rest of the program may bear no relationship to the subject of concentration in either thought, time or space."

President Ham (7) thinks of education "as being required to produce in our students competence, character and conscience."

The competence part is the technical part of our program. The character and conscience part belongs in the domain of our liberal arts. An alternative way of phrasing it is to regard the liberal component as education for citizenship and leadership.

As our society and our lives grow more complex, we are forced to develop a variety of skills. It becomes more and more important to develop, not only our cognitive abilities, but also our "relational" abilities. We cannot afford to educate on a purely "content" level. We must begin to educate for the "application" of knowledge. Engineers no longer design in solitude but rather are required to work in project groups. Accountants are not simply auditors, but are very frequently involved with management consultants. More than 60 per cent of all chartered accountants are in industry, usually as part of the managerial team. Even a history professor or a surgeon may suddenly find himself promoted to an administrative position which requires managerial skills.

. . . experience of higher education, it is commonly held, has better prepared them (students) for a career and life. Yet soon after embarking on their new careers and lives, these graduates discover that the knowledge and ability acquired in school are not enough, that something is missing in their preparation that prevents them from translating what they have learned into effective performance. Actual work experience is part of the answer, of course, but neither experience or knowledge is a guarantee of individual success. (8)

Klemp, in his research, found "that the amount of knowledge one acquires of a content area is generally unrelated to superior performance in an occupation and is often unrelated even to marginally acceptable performance." Although a minimum level of knowledge is required in many occupations, most require only that the individual be willing and able to learn new things. "It is neither the acquisition of knowledge nor the use of knowledge that distinguishes the outstanding performer, but rather the cognitive skills that are developed and exercised in the process of acquiring and using knowledge." The cognitive skills referred to are those that involve the ability to conceptualize — that enable individuals to bring order to the informational chaos that constantly surrounds us. For managers, it is "the ability to see thematic consistencies in diverse information and to organize and communicate this perception."

Wolff argues that it is the "characteristics of professional training, and not the degree of generality or specificity of the material learned, (that) set professional training off from other forms of education."

What matters is that the material should engage the student's intellect and sensibility, and that he should be held to the highest possible standards of thought, and that his activity be free of the extraneous career consequences of the professional school. Only by such genuine experimentation, sharply different from both the dilettante's superficiality and the professional's career commitment, can a young man discover who he is and who he wants to be. (9)

The difference between intellectual creations and professional activity is that the former "are judged by the criterion of truth, . . . not only fidelity to reality but also theoretical simplicity, explanatory power, conceptual elegance and logical coherence." Professions, unlike intellectual creations, "are social roles whose content and significance are defined by norms operative in the society."

Given the constraints set by the 90 credits for the Bachelor of Commerce degree, the 51-credit core requirement plus the 30-credit major in Accountancy courses, how can the 9 credit electives be best used so as to achieve at least a minimum standard of intellectual breadth for our students? Permitting them to use their electives for additional accounting courses only intensifies the "concentration." Similarly, taking additional commerce courses intensifies the business area. Neither, according to Klemp, will necessarily improve their performance as professionals.

What is required are courses which would give the student some "appreciation of the ways in which we gain and apply knowledge and understanding of the universe, of society and of ourselves" as well as "some understanding of, and experience in thinking about, moral and ethical problems."

Fulfilling these requirements could use the equivalent of approximately one academic year or 10-3 credit courses. Since we have only 3 3-credit electives available with the Bachelor of Commerce and a major in Accountancy, it is suggested that the electives be replaced by the following compulsory courses in the Humanities:

1. A 3-credit course dealing with **humanistic culture** in its broader context, placing artistic achievements in their social contexts and, where appropriate, showing some connection among the arts.
2. A 3-credit course in **History** whose aim would be to orient students historically to some of the major concerns of the contemporary world.
3. A 3-credit course in **Social Analysis and Moral Reasoning** whose general aim would be to introduce students to the central concepts and ideas of social science and moral and political philosophy.

The simple addition of these three Humanities courses will not change the Bachelor of Commerce, major in Accountancy into a "liberal arts" program. Nor will it meet the "standards" for an "educated person" defined by Dean Rosovsky or W. C. Winegard. However, it will bring our graduates a few steps closer to being "educated" persons. The Accountancy major will give them the depth required in one specific field of knowledge while the Commerce core will provide considerable insight into business. The new courses will add a limited "appreciation of the ways in which we gain and apply knowledge and understanding of the universe, of society and of ourselves" as well as "some understanding of, and experience in thinking about, moral and ethical problems."

The revised program will be more in line with the "aims of education" as seen by Whitehead. Students will be introduced to "culture" and given expertise in the particular area of accounting.

It should be noted that the reduction in the actual amount of accounting knowledge acquired should, based on Klemp's research, not affect the graduate's performance. On the other hand, the new courses should enhance "the cognitive skills . . . that involve the ability to conceptualize." These courses should also enable our students to see, more readily, the "thematic consistencies in diverse information and so organize and communicate this perception."

Footnotes

1. **Undergraduate Calendar 1980-81** (Montreal: Concordia University, 1980), p. 338.
2. **Report on the Core Curriculum** (Boston: Harvard University, Faculty of Arts and Science, 1979), p. 3.
3. Frye, Northrup, "The Definition of a University," in **Alternatives in Education**, ed. Bruce Rusk (Toronto: General Publishing, 1971), p. 80.
4. Whitehead, Alfred North, **The Aims of Education** (New York: Macmillan, 1929), p. 1.
5. Dewey, John, "Aims as Relative: Education as its Own End," in **Theory of Knowledge and Problems of Education**, ed. Donald Vandenberg (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1969), p. 26.
6. Winegard, W.C., "Ideas of the University and the New Reality: Creative or Compromise," in **Ideas of a University** eds. D. J. Ayre, C. E. Pascal, and J. Scarfe (Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Higher Education Group, 1979), p. 214.
7. Etkin, Bernard, **Ibid**, p. 20.
8. Klemp, George O., Jr., "Three Factors of Success," in **Relating Work and Education: Current Issues in Higher Education** ed. D. W. Vermilye (Washington: American Association for Higher Education, 1977).
9. Wolff, Robert Paul, **The Ideal of the University** (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), p. 20.